



ATF News

**Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
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ATF TECHNOLOGY ASSISTS IN SEARCH FOR FIREARM USED IN FATAL SHOOTING

DELAND, Fla. – Four explosives detection canines and their special agent handlers from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) are assisting the Volusia County Sheriff today in the search for the firearm used to kill a Land O'Lakes man on Sunday, Feb.18.

The canines and agents are searching a large area along Interstate 4, where Erik Houk, 36, was shot and killed as he was driving home from the Daytona 500 after becoming involved in a roadside altercation with three men. Houk was transported to Florida Hospital DeLand, where he was pronounced dead.

The three men, who are in custody following their arrest in Sanford, told police they threw away the gun somewhere along Interstate 4 after leaving the scene of the incident. Following the shooting, the Volusia County Sheriff's Office performed an extensive and large scale search for the firearm, lasting several days. ATF's efforts will support the ongoing investigation, and special agent canine handlers will be assisted by personnel from the Volusia County Sheriff's Office.

ATF specially trained canines and their handlers regularly lend support to investigations and security efforts, and are certified to detect 19,000 odors associated with explosives and gunpowder. Also used in the search for the firearm to further assist agents is a portable ITT Raytheon Thermal Imaging device. ATF is the Department of Justice's lead agency for training explosives and accelerant detection canines, and providing instruction to other federal, state, local and international law enforcement agencies.

(more)

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To date, ATF has trained more than 760 explosives detection canines and handlers in 16 countries, including Iraq; 617 of those teams are still working. More than 400 explosives detection canine teams are deployed internationally and 116 teams domestically, 34 of them with ATF special agent handlers.

More information on ATF and its programs to reduce violent crime can be found at www.atf.gov.

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